Mr. Rockefeller has no social side, and his home people are quite as solitary. He visits no one; no one visits him. He goes to no dinners, albeit his lack of stomach may lie at the dinner-roots of this. In all respects he gives the best of reasons for believing that, as he said, his sole pleasure is in "seeing his dividends come in."

In business he acts through two lieutenants, Mr. H. H. Rogers and Mr. William Rockefeller. The fact that he has fifteen hundred lawyers inclines one to pause and ponder the character of that business.

Mr. Rockefeller has provoked a vast amount of literature, very little of which has been eulogistic. No one than he has been more bitterly spoken against, more ferociously condemned. And yet why blame him? Could he have helped being what he is? Mind, I don't ask, "Could we have helped his being what he is?" He could no more have become that perilous creature, a billionaire, wanting our permission, than he could have stolen stars from the midnight sky.

One of the worst things about a billionaire and a billion-dollar company is the popular injustice invited. We accuse them of bribing our lawmakers and our law-officers—judges, prosecutors, sheriffs. More often it is a case of blackmail. Those law-servants of ours set traps for the billionaire and the billion-dollar company, seeing them so money-fat. Which, when rightly looked at, makes a strongest reason for not encouraging billionaires and billion-dollar companies in our avaricious midst. How many publics pass laws abolishing rum-shops as a temptation to drunkenness? By a parity of reasoning, should not those publics pass laws against billionaires and billion-dollar companies as a temptation to blackmail?

Everywhere in life we behold the victory of interest; and so, in hinting that you might better clip the wings of money, and in an effort to create opinion favorable to such wing-clipping, I harp always on your interest. This I take to be the wiser, shorter way. Opinion is a vine that never clambers very high save on a trellis of interest. Would you force a luxuriant growth of opinion—*i. e.*, conviction—in the breast of any man, you have but to plant his pocketbook at its roots. And so I tell you that the existence of a billionaire, however benevolent or generous or morally white he may be, is a disaster to your pocket. Just as there is more in his pockets, there is less in yours. And what said the blunt Cromwell? "That which maketh the one rich and the many poor suiteth not a commonwealth." Besides, a billionaire by his mere presence debauches the popular imagination—sets it to uttering vain knowledge and filling its belly with the east wind.

Against Mr. Rockefeller personally little or less can be said. He has no angers, no rages, speaks evil of no one. When a confidential inside agent betrayed him to Wall Street speculators he exhausted his spirit for revenge when he gave the traitor two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in money, made him the high-salaried president of a sub-company of Standard Oil, and cast him out. Mr. Rockefeller has no vices, although that, like his want of dinner-going, may be due to an absence of stomach. No one may be very vicious without a stomach. I said he had no vices. That is wrong. He permits himself the luxury of lies. Given cause, Mr. Rockefeller will make Ananias look like a beginner. Also he'll defend himself in his mendacities. He claims that you have no more right to search his head than to search his pockets; that whoever may lock a door may lie. And between you and me, I am by no means sure he isn't right.

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